

MINE BLAST KILLS 11 MEN IN ILLINOIS

Operation Called Blessing
When it Opened Six
Months Ago

HERRIN, Ill., Jan. 11, UPI—Rescue workers emerged from an explosion-shattered coal mine today and said there were no survivors among the 11 men trapped below.

William Orlandi, Illinois state director of mines and minerals, said most of the dead miners were found at the end of a 500-foot tunnel, huddled near an air vent 168 feet below ground.

The men of the second shift of the Blue Blaze Mine Company's No. 2 mine apparently never had a chance when the blast erupted with a roar last night.

Despite the obvious slim odds, a life-line of rescue workers burdened with oxygen tanks had risked death in searching for any possible survivors.

The explosion site was 2½ miles northwest of Herrin and a mile from the smaller community of Carterville. Herrin is 90 miles southeast of St. Louis.

In 'Little Egypt'

The Blue Blaze mine had been called a blessing when it opened in the economically depressed Illinois region called "Little Egypt" six months ago. But shortly after 6 p. m. yesterday, a choking ball of hot, black smoke welled from the mine shaft.

Pieces of shredded timber and mangled steel fell from the smoke. The window of an auto 30 yards from the pithead was shattered.

Death underground was no stranger to the people who waited above.

At West Frankfort, Ill., scarcely 20 miles away from the Blue Blaze mine, 119 men died when the New Orient Coal Mine blew up on Dec. 22, 1951. At near-by Centralia, Ill., 111 miners died in another coal mine explosion.